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Mental Health Progress Report.



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MENTAL HEALTH PROGRESS REPORT



HONOURABLE NEIL CRAWFORD
MINISTER

Alberta
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

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MENTAL HEALTH PROGRESS REPORT

Since assuming office, this Government has taken major steps in the mental health field.

1) Funding

\$1,200,000 has been allocated as seed money to assist in developments.

2) Major Programs

The responsibility for the care of the retarded has been moved from the Division of Mental Health and a separate service has been created.

3) Personnel

In this field, a start has been made on the restructuring of the head office of the Division of Mental Health.

- Dr. Charles P. Hellon has been appointed Director of Mental Health Services.
- Mr. Rheal J. LeBlanc has been appointed Associate Director of Mental Health Services.
- The position of Community Resources Consultant has been created.
- A Consultant in Nursing is in the process of being hired.

At the field level, 137 positions have been created in the Alberta Guidance Clinics and these have been advertised. It should be noted that 33 of these positions are redeployed from the mental hospitals and this reflects a shift in service delivery away from the large institutions and towards the community.

It is planned to change the names of the clinics and their function to allow them to encompass a more comprehensive field of mental health care.

The response to the advertisements so far has been excellent and the screening process of applicants has commenced. The interviews will commence in the near future.

Positions for Regional Co-ordinators of Mental Health Services have been created. Two of these have been filled:

- At Medicine Hat, Mr. Ed Benning has been appointed with a mandate to develop mental health services in close co-operation with the Community Resource Centre.
- At Red Deer, Mr. Ray Atkinson has been appointed. Because of his past experience in the area of mental retardation, Mr. Atkinson will also be assisting the Division of Services for the Handicapped in the development of their services, particularly in the central area of the Province.

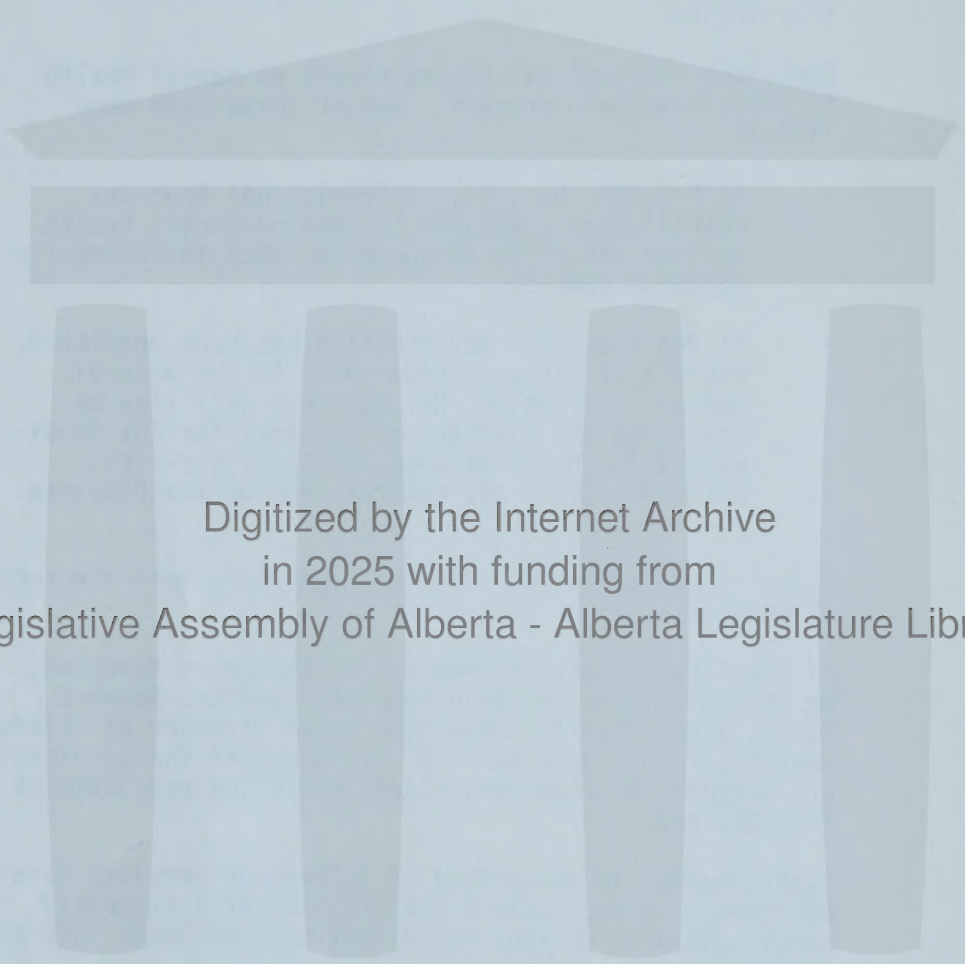
Mental hospitals have, over the last year, been the subject of change.

At the Alberta Hospital Ponoka, an Executive Director, Mr. Lloyd O'Toole has been appointed and Dr. Roger C. Bland, a psychiatrist, has been named Director of Clinical Services. This hospital has also acquired the services of Dr. Reginald H. Boardman, a well qualified psychiatrist from England.

Major changes in the method of delivery of services have commenced. These include the creation of a community nursing service whereby nurses followup patients into the community.

In addition, a start has been made on the organization of the hospital along the lines of functional units, in contrast to having a number of patients of similar types scattered throughout the various wards.

At the Alberta Hospital Edmonton, the newly introduced contract system of hiring medical staff, with its improved remuneration, has resulted in the acquisition and retention of well trained and highly qualified personnel.



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4) Personnel Training

\$48,000 has been placed into bursaries for specialist training in the mental health field.

Discussions have commenced between the Division of Mental Health, the Psychiatric Nurses' Association of Alberta and the Alberta Association of Registered Nurses, with a view to developing training programs more relevant to modern mental health services.

The first Divisional senior staff conference has been held.

5) Legislation

A new Mental Health Act has been prepared and consequential amendments have been made to a number of other Acts. The Act is designed to underwrite a new system of delivery of mental health care, namely at the community and local general hospital level.

The Sexual Sterilization Act has been repealed.

6) Programs

Sheltered Workshops

\$36,000 has been provided to sheltered workshops to extend their services. The Sheltered Workshop at Edmonton now takes referrals from both Alberta Hospital Edmonton and elsewhere.

Followup

A unit based at the Nurses' Residence of the Edmonton General Hospital is in its final planning stage. The unit has been created to provide followup care to psychiatric patients referred to it by Alberta Hospital Edmonton or any other treatment facility or source.

This unit will be staffed by psychiatrists, social workers, psychologists and nursing staff. It is designed to assist the Alberta Hospital Edmonton and other inpatient psychiatric units in the followup of patients, an area which is the subject of some neglect at the present time.

At Ponoka, four nurses have been designated as community nurses and have commenced work in the community.

The differential foster home rates, which have been used with success in the Alberta Hospital Edmonton foster home scheme, have been extended to other areas (Vegreville and Red Deer) and a set of standards has been implemented to ensure that these homes do not deteriorate and will not in future represent small, back wards as has been the case in other provinces.

The units at Claresholm, Rosehaven and Raymond have been placed under the Homes and Institutions Branch to facilitate cost-sharing. At Claresholm, in particular, a psychiatric consultant clinic has been arranged on a regular basis and a number of patients have been returned to mental hospitals for the purpose of social rehabilitation and eventual discharge. Others have been returned because they were in need of further psychiatric care and investigation.

7) Planning

Arrangements have been made to assist in the co-ordination of all mental health plans in general hospitals.

An ad hoc committee has been established to consider mental health services for children.

In an attempt to plan and budget more rationally, several meetings have been held by the Division with the heads of departments in the various field units. In this way, it is hoped to involve all field units early in the development of budgets.

Planning of forensic services, including maximum security facilities, has commenced and an ad hoc committee involving the Department of Health and Social Development and the Department of the Attorney General has been established.

As a first phase of this development, plans are being made for the removal of forensic patients from Ponoka, in the belief that the more specialized services in the belief that the more specialized services at the Alberta Hospital Edmonton will afford them better care and that removal of these patients from Ponoka will relieve that hospital of a heavy responsibility which tends to impede the care of other patients.

8) General

A new food contract has been negotiated at Alberta Hospital Edmonton with a resultant annual saving of nearly \$300,000 without any decrease in the standard of the service.

Planning has begun to better utilize existing laundries at our institutions.

Planning has begun with several general hospitals with a view to the joint purchase of drugs and savings in costs are imminent.

The continued improvement of services at Alberta Hospital Edmonton and Alberta Hospital Ponoka has resulted in further reductions in the patient populations (approximately 100 at Alberta Hospital Edmonton and approximately 65 at Alberta Hospital Ponoka).



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